



120 State Street - Montpelier, VT 05620-2501 - (802) 828-3135 - www.education.vermont.gov

GOV. SHUMLIN OUTLINES ADMINISTRATION CHANGES

*Governor re-establishes Department of Economic Development;
appoints Vilaseca as Education Secretary*

MONTPELIER – Gov. Peter Shumlin announced today that Armando Vilaseca will serve as the state's first Education Secretary for up to one year, helping the newly created agency transition into its new structure and working with the Administration to move an ambitious education agenda in the coming months. Vilaseca has served as Commissioner of Education since 2009, but moves into the Secretary's post as the Education Department elevates into an official state agency. Gov. Shumlin said he will be searching for a new Education Secretary next summer, with an expected transition by the next legislative session.

"I was lucky to have three strong candidates for the Secretary's post, but with my expansive education agenda, making a change in leadership right now does not make sense and I have confidence Armando is the right person to be sure we don't miss a beat in the coming months," Gov. Shumlin said. The Governor explained that he pushed hard to have state-level education leadership elevated to agency status, and wants a chance to bring in fresh thinking on education to be in the near future.

Vilaseca, who lives in Westford, has worked closely with the Governor on critical issues, including expanding early education, pressing for greater proficiency in math, and ensuring Vermont's schools are providing the education Vermont students need to compete in the global job market.

The Governor also announced that he is re-establishing the Department of Economic Development to focus exclusively on supporting Vermont businesses and recruiting new employers. That department had been rolled into Housing and Community Affairs during the previous gubernatorial administration. This change will not require additional personnel.

Commerce and Community Development Secretary Lawrence Miller said economic development is currently spearheaded by outgoing Deputy Secretary Patricia Moulton Powden. But, Miller added, that economic focus is a vital part of his agency's mission and demands a full-time focus. Miller said he will be running the search for the new Commissioner of Economic Development (recommendations should be sent to lawrence.miller@state.vt.us copying lori.camp@state.vt.us).

In addition, former state Rep. Lucy Leriche has been appointed Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Community Development. Leriche, of Hardwick, replaces Moulton Powden, who is leaving to take a position at the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation. Leriche has extensive experience overseeing multiple programs, including single family home programs, the Homeownership Center, housing development, rental housing operations; she also founded a not for profit organization for persons with severe and persistent mental illness.

"I am grateful that Lucy agreed to join the administration. Her professional experience running the Lamoille Housing Partnership is particularly valuable as we work on the long term recovery housing issues coming out of Irene" said Gov. Shumlin. "The broad policy experience she gained serving in the leadership of the Vermont House represents the type of perspective we need in the cabinet as we continue to break down the silos in state government."

In addition, the Governor announced that Sue Minter will step down from the post of Irene Recovery Officer on Jan. 11 to return to her position as Deputy Secretary of the Agency of Transportation. She will be replaced by Dave Rapaport, who has served as her deputy since Minter's appointment to lead the state's recovery efforts in early 2012.

"Sue has done a tremendous job of coordinating the efforts of state, federal and private partners that have enabled great progress in our recovery from Tropical Storm Irene over the past year," Governor Shumlin said. "While Irene recovery is not yet over, we need Sue's leadership back at the Agency of Transportation. The Irene Recovery Office will continue on and we're fortunate to have someone with Dave's capabilities and experience in the recovery that can step in to lead the next phase of these efforts."

Among changes in the Shumlin administration, Susan Allen was tapped as Deputy Chief of Staff. Allen, who has served as Special Assistant to the Governor since he took office in 2011, will continue to handle public and press communications for the Administration. In addition, she will oversee office and policy coordination, as well as constituent services. Allen replaces Alex MacLean, who is stepping down later this month to take a position in the private sector. Allen, of Calais, previously served in the administration of former Gov. Howard Dean, and worked as a journalist, most recently as editor of the Barre-Montpelier Times Argus.

Susan Bartlett, of Morrisville, former state Senator and chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, also joined the Shumlin administration as Special Assistant to the Governor, coordinating human services projects for the administration. She now moves to the Agency of Human Services as Special Projects Coordinator to focus on ensuring that low-income Vermonters have access to the skills and education they need to find good paying jobs.

In addition, former Rep. Floyd Nease has been appointed Director of Systems Integration, helping coordinate family services across Vermont, reducing the paperwork for families in need of state assistance, and speeding the flow of financial aid to those who qualify. Nease has in-depth experience in human services issues, previously serving as executive director of the Vermont Association for Mental Health and Addiction Recovery, director of Laraway Youth and Family Services, and as a Vermont state representative from 2002 until his resignation in January 2011.

"I am pleased to have both Susan and Floyd join the AHS leadership team. The Governor has given us the responsibility to address the benefits cliff issue, better coordinate services for children and families, reduce recidivism, and manage increasing caseloads in a difficult fiscal climate," Human Services Secretary Doug Racine said. "Floyd's and Susan's experiences and skills will be valuable assets as we take on all of our human services challenges."